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surface of the element and having a cavity inner dimension immediately adjacent the exterior surface which is greater than a cavity inner dimension in a region spaced from the exterior surface thereby defining a shoulder at the spaced region for resiliently holding a thermoformed article disposed in the cavity.--

REMARKS:

In the Official Action the Examiner objected to the previously submitted abstract. A new abstract is set forth above which does not use "means" terminology. It is hoped that the Examiner will agree that the new abstract submitted above is satisfactory.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 3-24 under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. As the Examiner will note by the amendments made above, the claims have been substantially amended with an eye to address the Examiner's comments set forth in the Official Action. It is hoped, with the amendments made to the claims, that the Examiner will agree that the applicant has addressed and has overcome all of the 35 USC § 112, second paragraph rejections. If there is any point which the applicant has not addressed, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if it a matter which could be resolved by an Examiner's Amendment.

The rejected the claims under 35 USC 102 (b) as being anticipated by UK Patent Application No. GB 2,263,660. This grounds for rejection is respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note by reference to the amendments made above, claim 1 has been amended to include a limitation, the essence of which comes from claim 4. Claim 4 has been amended to delete the limitation which has been moved to claim 1. The Examiner rejected claim 4 as being unpatentable over the

aforementioned UK patent application in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,966,386.

While the Examiner provided certain commentary regarding the rejection, it is respectfully noted that the Examiner did not address the specific language of claim 4 and it is respectfully submitted that the two references whether considered alone or together, do not anticipate or render obvious the subject matter of claim 1.

A number of new claims have been added by this Amendment. Claim 25 recites, inter alia, "at least one retention surface being defined by at least a portion of a wall of a cavity in an element associated with at least one of the extraction pick-up apparatus and the receiving conveying apparatus, the cavity communicating with at least one exterior surface of the element and having an interior dimension which is smallest in a region remote from said exterior surface to define a shoulder thereat for resiliently holding a thermoformed article disposed in the cavity." It is respectfully submitted that with this limitation, claim 25 clearly differentiates itself from the art cited by the Examiner.

New claim 31 recites, inter alia, a cavity communicates "with at least one exterior surface of the element and having a cavity inner dimension immediately adjacent said exterior surface which is greater than a cavity inner dimension in a region spaced from said exterior surface thereby defining a shoulder at said spaced region for resiliently holding a thermoformed article disposed in the cavity." It is respectfully submitted that the quoted limitation from claim 31 serves to clearly differentiate that claim from the art cited by the Examiner.

Turning to new claim 37, it recites, inter alia, "at least one surface adapted to resiliently hold said at least one thermoformed article, said at least one surface being defined by at least a portion of a wall of a hole in a plate associated with said extraction pick-up apparatus, the hole in the plate having an inner dimension immediately adjacent one exterior surface of the plate which is greater than an

inner dimension of the hole in an interior region spaced from exterior surfaces of the plate thereby defining a shoulder in said interior spaced region for resiliently holding a thermoformed article disposed in the hole in the plate." It is respectfully submitted that claim 37, with the language just quoted, clearly differentiates itself from the art cited by the Examiner.

Reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully requested.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C., 20231 on

February 24, 1999
(Date of Deposit)

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February 24, 1999
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Respectfully submitted,

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